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C O N F I D E N T I A L TAIPEI 000955

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STATE PASS AIT/W

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/07/2015

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SUBJECT: BREAKTHROUGH ANNOUNCED IN MARCH 19, 2004, ALLEGED  
PRESIDENTIAL ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT; PAN BLUE SUSPICIOUS

Classified By: AIT Director Douglas Paal; Reasons: 1.4 (B/D)

[1](#)1. (U) The Tainan Criminal Investigation Bureau (CIB) announced on Monday, March 7, a breakthrough in the year-long investigation of the March 19, 2004, shooting of President Chen Shui-bian and Vice President Annette Lu in Tainan. CIB Director Hou You-yi stated that law enforcement authorities believe an unemployed 64-year old Tainan man, Chen Yi-hsiung, was behind the assassination attempt. Chen was found drowned in Tainan's Anping Harbor last year and CIB officials have not yet found the gun used in the shooting.

[1](#)2. (U) The CIB has concluded that Chen probably acted alone in the assassination attempt, and that his motive was his reported unhappiness with President Chen's leadership. Despite the missing gun, CIB insists that all evidence points to Chen Yi-hsiung as the attempted assassin. The gun manufacturer and the middle men who supplied the gun all identified Chen as the buyer. In addition, surveillance photos from the scene of the shooting show Chen fleeing from the area. Finally, Chen's wife testified that he had admitted the shooting to her and had left behind letters that detailed his involvement in the crime, although she said that she had destroyed the letters to protect her family.

[1](#)3. (U) Pan-Blue officials quickly rejected the government's claims, charging the government is hiding the truth about the March 2004 shooting. Following the CIB announcement, KMT spokesman Chang Jung-kung responded that Taiwan would never learn what really happened because the government was trying to blame a dead person for the assassination attempt. Chang announced that the Pan-Blue parties would go ahead with their plan to hold a mass rally in Taipei on the March 19 anniversary to protest the shooting. People First Party legislative whip Lee Yung-ping called the CIB investigation absurd, charging it lacked both evidence and convincing motive.

[1](#)4. (C) Comment: Given the deep mutual distrust between Blue and Green coalitions, the Pan-Blue camp is not likely to accept the findings of the CIB's investigation as long as key pieces of evidence, such as the gun, remain missing. Given the near certainty that the police will never obtain definitive proof of their conclusions, the investigation will likely reinforce the deep mutual distrust between the KMT and the Green camp.  
PAAL